

## **Education and Workforce Development Cabinet**

# **26-year program to preserve local records passes milestone**

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### **Contact Information:**

Frankfort, Ky. – With the recent release of 29 grants totaling \$596,571, the Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives (KDLA) Local Records Program has now distributed more than \$18 million in grants to help preserve local government records in all 120 Kentucky counties.

Since 1984, the Local Records Program has assisted local government agencies in preserving and managing local records by awarding approximately 1,500 grants. It was the first program of its kind in the United States.

“Preserving and managing local records for future generations is an important function of an open government,” Gov. Steve Beshear said. “This program provides local governments with an organized, systematic approach to safeguarding valuable archival records and ensures that the public has access to those records.”

Public agencies are required by law to manage their records to make valuable information such as tax records, deeds, plats, mortgages, wills and articles of incorporation available and accessible to the public. Government records can be in a variety of formats and can include paper and electronic documents, photographs, maps and recordings.

“There are local records that go back to the 1700s before Kentucky was a state. Piecing together those local records tells the story of Kentucky from the settlers all the way to current residents,” said State Librarian and KDLA Commissioner Wayne Onkst.

The mission of the program is to preserve, protect and make available records with continuing archival value and to assist local agencies with records management through grant support, training and direct service. The program has issued grants for such work as microfilming, preservation, equipment, automated indexing, digital imaging systems and codification of ordinances.

KDLA staff has often helped counties recover records that have been lost or damaged because of disasters such as floods, fires, burst water pipes and tornadoes, and because pages have been stolen from archival documents, Onkst said.

For example, a flood in 1997 covered many bound volumes of archival documents in the Harrison County Clerk's office. KDLA staff members were able to preserve records such as estate settlements, veteran discharges, deeds and mortgages by recreating them using microfilm produced through a local records grant.

"We recognize that sound records management strives to provide the right information to the right person, at the right time, at the lowest possible cost," Onkst said. "Records of permanent and archival value not only document the history of counties and cities, they give us an insight into the cultural make-up of those areas. It is vital that they are preserved for future generations."

KDLA, an agency of the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, provides equitable access to quality library and information resources and services, as well as helps public agencies ensure that legislatively mandated documentation of government programs is created, efficiently maintained, and made accessible. For more information on KDLA resources, programs and services visit [www.kdla.ky.gov](http://www.kdla.ky.gov) or call 502-564-8300 ext. 315.